

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 SSM-05 CIAE-00
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DRAFTED BY NEA/P:RUNDELAND:DP
APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN
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SSM - MR. MCANDREW
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NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH
NEA/IRN - MR. NAAS
NEA/EGY - MR. NEWBERRY

-----082323Z 122691 /65

O 082223Z JUN 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
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USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USCINCEUR

UNCLAS STATE 132637

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - JUNE 8

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE, FOLLOWING ARE
EXCERPTS FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING FOR
JUNE 8, 1977:

Q. THERE IS A REPORT IN THIS MORNING'S PAPER THAT THE
GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED NOT TO PROCEED WITH THE SALE OF THE
F-18L JET FIGHTERS TO IRAN. CAN YOU CONFIRM THAT STORY?

A. WELL, THE STORY SOMEWHAT CONFUSES THE ISSUE. THE
POINT IS NO FINAL DECISION HAS BEEN MADE ON THE POSSIBLE
SALE OF THE F-18L TO ANY FOREIGN COUNTRY. BASICALLY, THE
PRINCIPAL QUESTION IS WHETHER THE AIRCRAFT IS GOING TO BE
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PRODUCED FOR U.S. FORCES, AND THIS MATTER STILL HASN'T
BEEN DECIDED. IT'S STILL UNDER STUDY.

I JUST WANT TO NOTE THAT THE ADMINISTRATION'S NEW ARMS
TRANSFER POLICY REQUIRES THAT NEW, ADVANCED WEAPONS SYSTEMS
BE DEPLOYED IN AMERICAN FORCES BEFORE THEY ARE OFFERED FOR
EXPORT.

Q. YOU MEAN THAT LITERALLY, RIGHT BEFORE THEY ARE OFFERED
FOR EXPORT OR BEFORE THEY ARE EXPORTED?

A. BEFORE THEY GO OUT FOR EXPORT. AS I UNDERSTAND IT,
THEY HAVE TO BE IN OUR INVENTORY FIRST BEFORE THEY CAN
ACTUALLY BE EXPORTED.

Q. BECAUSE THERE IS A GREAT TIME LAG OF SOME YEARS BE-
TWEEN THE OFFER AND THE EXPORT.

A. RIGHT.

Q. THIS MEANS IF THE AIR FORCE DOES NOT PROCURE THIS
PLANE, IT WILL NOT BE GIVEN TO IRAN - NOT BE SOLD TO
IRAN?

A. I THINK THAT THE CRITERIA OF THE ARMS TRANSFER POLICY ARE PERFECTLY CLEAR AND I'M JUST GOING TO STOP AT THAT RIGHT THERE.

Q. THIS AIRCRAFT, I UNDERSTOOD, WAS ONLY AN EXPORT AIRCRAFT FOR IRAN?

A. THE QUESTION OF DEPLOYMENT IS A QUESTION WHICH IS STILL WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT AND HAS NOT BEEN RESOLVED.

Q. COULD THEY DECIDE NOT TO USE THE PLANE IN THE AMERICAN INVENTORY AND STILL SELL IT FOR EXPORT?
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A. THE CRITERIA ARE THAT THEY SHALL NOT BE. THERE IS, AS I RECALL, AN ESCAPE HATCH ALL THE WAY FOR THE PRESIDENT IN SOME LARGER SENSE OF NATIONAL INTEREST, BUT I'M NOT GOING TO GO BEYOND THE CRITERIA THAT ARE SET FORTH.

Q. HASN'T THERE IN FACT BEEN A DECISION HERE? DOESN'T THIS AMOUNT TO SAYING THIS AIRCRAFT WILL NOT GO TO IRAN AS AN EXPORT AIRCRAFT?

A. I THINK THAT THE CRITERIA ARE PERFECTLY CLEAR.

Q. NO, BUT I'M ASKING, HAS THERE NOT BEEN A DECISION THAT THIS PARTICULAR AIRCRAFT WILL NOT GO TO IRAN?

A. NO, I'M SORRY. THE OPENING STATEMENT STANDS. THERE HAS NOT BEEN A FINAL DECISION MADE ON THE POSSIBLE SALE OF THE F-18L TO ANY FOREIGN COUNTRY.

Q. WHAT ABOUT A TENTATIVE DECISION?

A. I'M GOING TO STAND ON THIS.

Q. WELL, I RAISE THAT POINT BECAUSE YOU FELLOWS ARE ALWAYS SWIMMING THROUGH ALL KINDS OF WORDS AND AMBIGUITIES, SO WHAT ABOUT TENTATIVE DECISION?

A. I DON'T THINK THE DECISION HAS BEEN TAKEN ON THE SALE OF THIS AIRCRAFT TO ANY FOREIGN COUNTRY.

Q. WHAT ARE THE FACTORS UNDER CONSIDERATION CONCERNING THE SALE THAT IRAN IS --

A. THE DEPLOYMENT OF IT? WELL, FIRST, THE FACTOR THAT IS PRINCIPALLY UNDER CONSIDERATION IS WHETHER OR NOT IT'S GOING TO BE PRODUCED FOR UNITED STATES FORCES.
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Q. YOU SAID NO FINAL DECISION HAS BEEN MADE ABOUT EXPORT TO ANY COUNTRY. I WANT TO KNOW WHAT THE CONSIDERATIONS ARE.

A. THE CONSIDERATIONS -- WHICH I'M NOT GOING TO GO THROUGH THAT LIST, AND YOU HAVE IT--IS THE ENTIRE RANGE OF CONSIDERATIONS THAT GO INTO THE NEW ARMS TRANSFER POLICY, ALL OF WHICH WOULD APPLY TO THIS OR ANY OTHER COUNTRY.

Q. HODDING, MURREY ASKED THE QUESTION, BUT I WILL ASK IT AGAIN IN A DIFFERENT WAY. YOU'RE SAYING THAT THE F-18L IS UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION TO BE IN THE AMERICAN FORCES, OR HAS BEEN?

A. I THINK I WANT TO READ THE EXACT WORDING HERE, BECAUSE I BELIEVE THAT THE ANSWER TO THAT IS YES.

Q. BECAUSE MY UNDERSTANDING WAS THAT THE PLANE WAS ONLY CONSIDERED FOR EXPORT FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, AND OF COURSE IT COMES FROM A PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION THAT WASN'T BOUND BY -- THAT DIDN'T HAVE THE CRITERIA.

A. LET ME READ THIS TO YOU, BECAUSE THIS GOES DIRECTLY TO IT. "A PRINCIPAL QUESTION IS WHETHER THIS AIRCRAFT WILL BE PRODUCED FOR THE UNITED STATES FORCES, AND THAT MATTER IS STILL UNDER STUDY."

Q. WHAT HAPPENS IF THE AIR FORCE DOESN'T WANT THAT PLANE? CAN IT BE USED FOR EXPORT?

A. I THINK THAT THE ADMINISTRATION'S ARMS TRANSFER POLICY HAS AS ONE SPECIFIC PORTION THAT NEW ADVANCED WEAPONS SYSTEMS MUST BE DEPLOYED IN AMERICAN FORCES FIRST, AND THAT THEREFORE THE CRITERIA ARE PERFECTLY CLEAR ON THIS. I AM NOT GOING TO GO BEYOND THAT.
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Q. YOU SAID "FIRST." BUT WHAT IF IT ISN'T DEPLOYED AT ALL?

A. THEN THE CRITERIA STAND FORWARD.

Q. ISN'T ONE OF THOSE CRITERIA THE PROPOSITION THAT NO WEAPON SYSTEM WILL BE DEVELOPED PRIMARILY FOR EXPORT?

A. I WILL HAVE TO GO FIND IT.

Q. WHAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND HERE IS THAT THE NORTHROP COMPANY WHICH MANUFACTURES THIS F-18L APPARENTLY HAS OFFERED THE PLANE TO IRAN. IRAN HAS ACCEPTED A CONTRACT FOR 250 OF THEM.

A. YOU ARE MAKING A BUNCH OF ASSERTIONS, NONE OF WHICH I AM ACCEPTING.

Q. WELL, IT IS IN THE NEWSPAPERS.

A. I KNOW. AND I HAVE SEEN SO MANY THINGS IN THE NEWS-PAPER OVER THE LAST 42 YEARS --

Q. YOU MEAN THE STORY IN THE WASHINGTON POST IS NOT TRUE, THIS IS TYPICAL, IS THAT RIGHT?

A. I AM SAYING NOTHING OF THE SORT. WHAT I AM SAYING IS THAT THE FACT THAT IT IS IN THE NEWSPAPER DOESN'T MAKE IT TRUE.

Q. WELL, ALL RIGHT. THEN DO YOU KNOW WHETHER OR NOT NORTHROP HAS MADE THIS OFFER TO IRAN?

A. I THINK YOU CAN ASK NORTHROP ABOUT THAT. IF THAT STORY HAS VALIDITY, THAT OFFER WAS MADE IN A PREVIOUS UNCLASSIFIED

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ADMINISTRATION'S TENURE. BUT I THINK YOU CAN ASK NORTHROP. I SAID, IF IT WERE TRUE.

Q. HAVE ANY OTHER COUNTRIES APART FROM IRAN SHOWN INTEREST OR REQUESTED THIS PLANE?

A. I DON'T KNOW OF ANY. I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT THOUGH.

Q. THERE IS, AS YOU KNOW, AN INTENSE RIVALRY BETWEEN SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN AS TO WHICH CAN ACQUIRE MORE AMERICAN EQUIPMENT. AND THERE IS SOME CONCERN -- ONE AGAINST THE OTHER.

SECONDLY, THERE IS A SPECIAL INDIAN PROBLEM -- OR THERE IS, GENERALLY. ARE THESE NATIONAL INTERESTS, THE INTEREST OF INDIA, SAUDI ARABIA, AND POSSIBLY ANY OTHER COUNTRIES, INVOLVED IN DECIDING WHETHER OR NOT TO SELL THIS PLANE TO IRAN?

A. I THINK OUR BASIC CRITERIA ARE THE GUIDELINES IN OUR ARMS TRANSFER POLICY, AMONG WHICH, OF COURSE, ARE WHAT THE INTRODUCTION OF CERTAIN WEAPONS SYSTEMS INTO AN AREA MIGHT DO TO THE SECURITY OF THAT AREA.

Q. CAN YOU GIVE US A BALLPARK ESTIMATE AS TO WHEN THE DECISION WILL BE MADE AS TO WHETHER OR NOT IT WILL BE USED BY U.S. FORCES?

A. NO, I CAN'T.

Q. MAY I ASK FOR FURTHER REFINEMENT? IF IT SHOULD BE DECIDED THAT THIS PLANE IS TO BE PROCURED BY THE NAVY FOR CARRIER-BASED JET FIGHTERS, WOULD THAT THEN QUALIFY IT FOR EXPORT AS A LAND-BASED FIGHTER, WHICH IS WHAT THE IRANIANS WANT?
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A. I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION. I THINK ON THAT ONE I WOULD HAVE TO EITHER CHECK IT, OR I WOULD SUGGEST YOU TRY THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT.

Q. THAT IS THE HEART OF THE WHOLE PROBLEM YOU ARE DISCUSSING HERE.

A. WHETHER AFTER WE USE IT FOR ONE WAY, IT IS THEN AVAILABLE FOR OTHERS TO BUY FOR ANOTHER USE.

Q. WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE MEETING IN MOSCOW BETWEEN THE EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER FAHMI, OUR FRIEND, AND MR. GROMYKO?

A. NOTHING.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING AT ALL?

Q. WE ARE NOT CONCERNED ABOUT ANYTHING THAT MIGHT DEVELOP?

A. A NUMBER OF FOREIGN MINISTERS MEET WITH A NUMBER OF OTHER FOREIGN MINISTERS QUITE OFTEN, AND WE DON'T COMMENT ON IT WHEN THEY DO SO.

Q. IS THE UNITED STATES PREPARED TO SELL ARMS TO EGYPT?

IS IT PREPARED TO SEND LETTERS OF OFFER TO THE HILL FOR THAT REASON?

A. THERE IS NO CHANGE IN WHAT WAS SAID ON THAT SUBJECT AT THE TIME OF THE LAST VISIT BY AN EGYPTIAN OFFICIAL TO THIS COUNTRY.

Q. TELL US ABOUT THIS MEETING THIS AFTERNOON THAT
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MR. ATHERTON IS HAVING WITH THE HOUSE COMMITTEE. HOW DID THIS COME ABOUT, THIS HEARING?

A. I LITERALLY HAVE NO IDEA. I THINK THAT IT WAS

PROBABLY REQUESTED BY THE COMMITTEE, AND HE IS GOING TO REVIEW MIDDLE EASTERN POLICY.

Q. IS HE GOING TO TELL THEM ANYTHING ABOUT THE THINKING IN THE DEPARTMENT TO SPONSOR OR SUPPORT A RESOLUTION IN THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE COMING SESSION THAT WILL INCLUDE COMPENSATION AND HOMELAND WITH U.S. APPROVAL?

A. I WOULD SAY CATEGORICALLY THAT NOTHING ALONG THIS LINE IS GOING TO BE COMING OUT OF THIS TESTIMONY THIS AFTERNOON.

Q. NOT THIS AFTERNOON. BUT YOU ARE NOT SAYING THAT IT IS NOT HAPPENING WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT.

A. I AM NOT PREPARED TO COMMENT ON THAT AT ALL EXCEPT TO SAY THAT I KNOW NOTHING OF SUCH A PROPOSAL.

Q. WELL, WILL YOU LOOK INTO IT AND SEE WHETHER THERE IS, AND TELL US ABOUT IT?

A. I WILL LOOK INTO IT. I DOUBT THAT THERE IS GOING TO BE AN ANSWER ON IT.

Q. SINCE 242 AND 338 ARE THE BASIS FOR U.S. POLICY. DO YOU THINK THE STATE DEPARTMENT WOULD BE PROUD OF THE UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY PUTTING OUT AN ANALYSIS OF THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION WITHOUT ANY MENTION OF THESE TWO THINGS AS BEING THE BASIC U.S. POLICY?

A. I DON'T HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THAT.

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Q. YOU HAVE NO COMMENT. DOESN'T THE STATE DEPARTMENT GIVE POLICY GUIDANCE TO USIA ANY LONGER?

A. THE USIA AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAVE A POLICY RELATIONSHIP, YES.

Q. YES, A RELATIONSHIP. THE STATE DEPARTMENT LAYS OUT A POLICY FOR THE USIA, DOESN'T IT?

A. THE STATE DEPARTMENT IS THE ENUNCIATOR OF POLICY AND IT IS SUPPOSED TO BE COORDINATED WITH THE USIA.

Q. RIGHT. THIS IS WHY I ASKED THE QUESTION HERE. THERE IS AN ANALYSIS PUT OUT BY USIA, APPARENTLY WORLD-WIDE AND OVER THE VOICE OF AMERICA, IN WHICH THEY DISCUSSED THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION AND MAKE IT LOOK LIKE ISRAEL IS UNDER DEEP CRITICISM AND IS A GREAT WORRY TO THE UNITED STATES, AND NOTHING ABOUT THE 242 AND 338 AS BEING THE

BASIS FOR POLICY UPON WHICH THE UNITED STATES HAS BEEN
STANDING FOR ALL THESE YEARS. WHY IS THAT?

A. ONE, I DON'T HAVE THE TEXT BEFORE ME. TWO, I AM NOT
REALLY PREPARED TO COMMENT ON EACH COMMENTARY THAT USIA
OFFERS EITHER THROUGH VOA OR OTHER PUBLICATIONS.

Q. THIS LOOKS LIKE A PRESENTATION OF A POSITION TAKEN BY
THE U.S. GOVERNMENT.

A. AGAIN, I CAN'T COMMENT ON SOMETHING I HAVEN'T READ.

2. THE FOLLOWING ANSWER TO A QUESTION TAKEN WAS PROVIDED
THE SPOKESMAN:

Q. IS THE STATE DEPARTMENT AWARE OF ANY EGYPTIAN TROOP
MOVEMENTS IN SINAI WHICH VIOLATE THE LETTER OR SPIRIT OF
THE SINAI AGREEMENT?
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A. WE ARE AWARE OF THESE ACCUSATIONS, WHICH HAVE APPEARED
IN THE ISRAELI MEDIA, BUT WE WILL CONTINUE OUR PRACTICE
SINCE THE CONCLUSION OF THE SINAI AGREEMENT IN 1975 OF
NOT COMMENTING WHEN SUCH CHARGES ARISE FROM TIME TO
TIME. THE AGREEMENT ESTABLISHED THE MACHINERY THROUGH
THE UN FOR DEALING WITH SUCH CHARGES AND FOR RECTIFYING
OCCASIONAL TECHNICAL VIOLATIONS, AND THE PARTIES HAVE
FOUND THE AGREEMENT TO HAVE WORKED OUT QUITE SATISFAC-
TORILY. VANCE

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
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Disposition Event:
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Disposition Reason:
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